



Town Hall 551 Hot Springs Blvd  
Pagosa Spring, CO 81147

**AGENDA**  
Dark Sky Steering Committee Meeting  
March 16, 2026 @ 5:00 PM

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### **REMOTE PARTICIPATION**

Join Zoom Meeting By Computer - <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88260715384>  
Dial by Phone - 1-719-359-4580 US - Meeting ID: 882 6071 5384

A Zoom link is made available. The Town cannot guarantee internet service or online broadcasting. Remote participation is at the risk of attendees. The meeting will continue in person regardless of the broadcast capability.

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- I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**
- II. ROLL CALL**
- III. PUBLIC COMMENT**
- IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS**
- V. CONSENT AGENDA**
- VI. NEW BUSINESS**
  - 1. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair for 2026**
  - 2. Earth Day Celebration**
  - 3. International Dark Sky Week Proclamation**
  - 4. Discussion of Section 6.11 of the Land Use and Development Code**
  - 5. International Dark Sky Place Application Process**
- VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**
- VIII. REPORTS AND COMMENTS**
- IX. ADJOURNMENT**



## AGENDA BRIEF

**MEETING:** Dark Sky Steering Committee

**FROM:** Katelyn Tunnell

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**PROJECT:** Election of Chair and Vice-Chair for 2026

**ACTION:** Discussion and Action

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**PURPOSE/BACKGROUND:**

Land Use Development Code Section 2.5.6.A.1 states, "Annually, at the first regular meeting of the year, each board and commission shall elect, by majority vote, from its membership a Chair and vice-Chair, with each being eligible for reelection, and each serving a one-year term..."

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. Move to elect [Committee member name] as the Dark Sky Steering Committee Chair and [Committee member name] as the Dark Sky Steering Committee Vice-Chair for 2026.



## AGENDA BRIEF

**MEETING:** Dark Sky Steering Committee  
**FROM:** Katelyn Tunnell

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**PROJECT:** Earth Day Celebration  
**ACTION:** Discussion

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**PURPOSE/BACKGROUND:**

Discuss staffing and coordination for the Dark Sky booth at the April 19, 2026 Earth Day Celebration



## AGENDA BRIEF

**MEETING:** Dark Sky Steering Committee

**FROM:** Owen O'Dell

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**PROJECT:** International Dark Sky Week Proclamation

**ACTION:** Discussion and Action

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### **PURPOSE/BACKGROUND:**

A local property owner, and dark sky advocate, has brought forward the proclamation for the Town of Pagosa Springs to support International Dark Sky Week, April 13<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup>. The Town of Pagosa Springs celebrated this week last year. With the newly formed Dark Sky Steering Committee's objective of Dark Sky Place Certification, the recognition of this week will show the committee's dedication to the initiative.

### **Recommendations:**

1. The Dark Sky Steering Committee recommends that Town Council proclaim April 13-20, 2026, as International Dark Sky Week.

### **Alternate Motions:**

1. The Dark Sky Steering Committee recommends that Town Council proclaim April 13-20, 2026, as International Dark Sky Week, with amendments.
2. The Dark Sky Steering Committee denies the proclamation with direction to Staff.



# A Proclamation by the Town Council of the Town of Pagosa Springs

## PROCLAMATION IN SUPPORT OF INTERNATIONAL DARK SKY WEEK APRIL 13<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup>, 2026

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Pagosa Springs is located adjacent to the San Juan National Forest, the Weminuche Wilderness, and the South San Juan Wilderness, where we regularly enjoy dark skies; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Pagosa is in close proximity to Chimney Rock National Monument, a newly certified Dark Sky Park within Archuleta County; and

**WHEREAS**, our local dark skies encourage people to experience stargazing with and without telescopes or binoculars; and

**WHEREAS**, these experiences can lead to further interest in astronomy, astrophysics, even mathematics, and just the pleasure of experiencing the natural world; and

**WHEREAS**, Colorado is home to many nocturnal wildlife species which require the natural cycle of night and day to migrate, hunt for food, procreate, pollinate, and mate; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Pagosa Springs Planning Department is working to minimize light pollution; its effects on human health and wellness, harm to wildlife, harm to our ecosystem, energy waste, crime and safety, and our heritage of dark night skies; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Pagosa Springs has formalized a Dark Sky Steering Committee with the objective of obtaining Dark Sky Place Certification; and

**WHEREAS**, Dark Sky International, the globally recognized authority on light pollution, recognizes Dark Sky Week as an opportunity to raise awareness of the effects of light pollution, to provide education, resources, and solutions for the public; to encourage responsible outdoor lighting in our neighborhoods, to encourage the protection of dark skies as well as the enjoyment of our night skies, and

**WHEREAS**, following the Five Principles of Responsible Outdoor Lighting include useful, targeted, low-level, controlled, and warm colored lighting to maintain our unique rural character and improve the quality of life for all citizens and visitors.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, be it resolved, that we, the Town Council of Pagosa Springs, Colorado, do hereby proclaim April 13-20, 2026, to be **International Dark Sky Week**. We ask that each resident and visitor to the Town of Pagosa Springs join us in observing and enjoying Dark Sky Week 2026. We also ask that everyone help raise awareness of light pollution and support our precious resource of dark skies. We ask and encourage all residents and visitors to learn about the benefits of dark skies in our community, and to celebrate everything dark skies represent.

GIVEN under my hand and seal this \_\_\_\_ day of April 2026.

Attest:

Signed:

\_\_\_\_\_  
April Hessman, Town Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Shari Pierce, Mayor



## AGENDA BRIEF

**MEETING:** Dark Sky Steering Committee

**FROM:** Katelyn Tunnell

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**PROJECT:** Discussion of Section 6.11 of the Land Use and Development Code

**ACTION:** Discussion

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### **PURPOSE/BACKGROUND:**

The general purpose of this section 6.11 is to require outdoor lighting that is adequate for safety and convenience; in scale with the activity to be illuminated and its surroundings; directed to the surface or activity to be illuminated; and designed to clearly render people and objects and contribute to a pleasant night environment. Section 6.11 of the Town of Pagosa Springs Land Use and Development Code (LUDC) establishes the Town's standards for exterior lighting associated with development and redevelopment.

As the Town explores pursuing designation as an International Dark Sky Community, it is important to review the existing exterior lighting standards to understand how they are currently applied and enforced and whether they align with Dark Sky best practices. This discussion will allow the Dark Sky Steering Committee to review LUDC Section 6.11, identify any gaps between the current regulations and Dark Sky certification requirements, and discuss potential updates that may support the Town's efforts toward certification.

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## 6.11. EXTERIOR LIGHTING

### 6.11.1. PURPOSE

The general purpose of this Section is to require outdoor lighting that is adequate for safety and convenience; in scale with the activity to be illuminated and its surroundings; directed to the surface or activity to be illuminated; and designed to clearly render people and objects and contribute to a pleasant night environment.

### 6.11.2. APPLICABILITY

- A. **General.** All exterior lighting for any type of residential or nonresidential development shall comply with the standards of this Section, unless exempted in subsection D. below.
- B. **Existing lighting.** All lighting existing prior to the adoption of this Section shall be brought into compliance with this Section upon reconstruction or remodeling of more than a cumulative fifty (50) percent of floor area of such building or facility.
- C. **Lighting plan requirement.** The submission of an exterior lighting plan is required prior to the approval of any subdivision or planned unit development, or site plan, or the issuance of a building permit, to promote a standard of illumination that is unified in design, color, intensity, and fixtures. The plan shall describe such things as the light source, level of illumination, hours of illumination, the orientation, and the effects the illumination has on adjoining properties and roadways.
- D. **Exempt lighting.** The following types of lighting are exempt from the requirements of this Section.
  - 1. Soffit or wall-mounted luminaires that are permanently attached to single-family residential dwellings, not to exceed the height of the eave.
  - 2. Public street and right-of-way lighting.
  - 3. Temporary decorative seasonal lighting provided that individual lamps have a light output of two hundred (200) lumens or less.
  - 4. Temporary lighting for emergency or nighttime work and construction.
  - 5. Temporary lighting for theatrical, television, and performance areas, or for special events authorized by the Town.
  - 6. Lighting required and regulated by the Federal Aviation Administration.
  - 7. Lighting for outdoor recreational uses such as ball diamonds, playing fields, tennis courts, and similar uses, provided that such uses comply with the following standards:
    - a. Maximum permitted light post height: Eighty (80) feet.
    - b. Maximum permitted illumination at the property line: Two (2) footcandles.
    - c. Limits on hours of illumination: Exterior lighting shall be extinguished no later than 11:00 p.m. An exception may be granted by the Town Council at their discretion.

### 6.11.3. GENERAL REVIEW STANDARD

If installed, all exterior lighting shall meet the functional security needs of the proposed land use without adversely affecting adjacent properties or the community. For purposes of this Section, properties that comply with the design standards of Section 6.11.4 shall be deemed to not adversely affect adjacent properties or the community.

### 6.11.4. DESIGN STANDARDS

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Exterior lighting is not required except for purposes of public safety. However, if installed, all exterior lighting shall meet the following design standards:

- A. All light sources shall be concealed or shielded with luminaries with cut-offs with an angle not exceeding ninety (90) degrees to minimize the potential for glare and unnecessary diffusion on adjacent property. For purposes of this provision, "cutoff angle" is defined as the angle formed by a line drawn from the direction of light rays at the light source and a line perpendicular to the ground from the light source above from which no light is emitted.
- B. Parking lots and other background spaces shall be illuminated as unobtrusively as possible while meeting the functional needs of safe circulation and protection of people and property. Foreground spaces, such as building entrances and outside seating areas, shall utilize local lighting that defines the space without glare.
- C. In no case shall exterior lighting add any footcandle illumination at any point off-site.
- D. All outdoor light not necessary for security purposes shall be reduced, activated by motion sensor detectors, or turned off during non-operating hours.
- E. Light fixtures used to illuminate flags, statues, or any other objects mounted on a pole, pedestal, or platform shall use a narrow cone beam of light that will not extend beyond the illuminated object.
- F. For upward-directed architectural, landscape, and decorative lighting, direct light emissions shall not be visible above the building roof line.
- G. No flickering or flashing lights shall be permitted.
- H. Street lighting and associated underground street lighting supply circuits shall be installed. The spacing shall be determined by a lighting professional for local streets.
- I. Arterial streets and commercial areas may have a higher level of lighting if determined by the Town Council to be appropriate.
- J. Any light used for illumination of signs, parking and security area, or for any purpose other than street lighting shall be arranged to direct and confine all light beams to the subject property and away from nearby properties and the vision of passing motorists.
- K. Internally illuminated signs are discouraged.
- L. Visible light sources will be permitted with motion detecting devices so long as such lights, once activated, remain lit for no more than five (5) minutes before deactivating.



## **AGENDA BRIEF**

**MEETING:** Dark Sky Steering Committee

**FROM:** Owen O'Dell

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**PROJECT:** International Dark Sky Place Application Process

**ACTION:**

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**PURPOSE/BACKGROUND:**

Staff aims to provide a clear understanding of the application process requirements and timeliness. This will allow the Town of Pagosa Springs' Dark Sky Steering Committee to digest and determine the next steps in this endeavor.



# INTERNATIONAL DARK SKY PLACE (IDSP) APPLICATION PROCESS

## PHASE I: INITIAL INQUIRY

Applicant reviews eligibility with IDA staff; notifies IDA of intent to pursue IDSP application

**Average Timeline: 45 days\***

**STEP 1: The applicant reviews certification process; indicates interest in the program**

>Anytime; via [darksky.org](http://darksky.org)

**STEP 2: The applicant receives an assessment of site eligibility and IDSP category recommendation from IDA staff**

>Within 30 days of initial inquiry submission; Via communication with IDSP staff

**STEP 3: After eligibility is determined by IDA staff, the applicant notifies IDA of intent to pursue formal Dark Sky Place certification**

>Timeline varies based on eligibility and guideline requirements; Applicant confirms intent with IDSP staff via written communication

## PHASE II: FORMAL APPLICATION

With support from IDA staff, applicant actively works to meet the application requirements.

**Average Timeline: 1-3 years**

**STEP 1: The applicant works closely with IDSP Manager to develop application in accordance with appropriate guidelines**

>Anytime, ongoing; Via email with IDSP staff/manager

**STEP 2: With IDSP Manager approval, the applicant submits an application for Dark Sky Places Committee (DSPC) review**

>On or before submission deadline for review at the following committee meeting; Via submission to IDSP Program Manager

## PHASE III: CERTIFICATION

Applicant waits while review is in process

**Average Timeline: 90-150 days**

**STEP 1: Application is reviewed by DSPC. One of the following outcomes occur:**

- >Application is approved by DSPC - application is submitted for approval by IDA Board of Directors
- >Application is approved by DSPC with conditions - application is revised, applicant may resubmit anytime for re-review by DSPC
- >Application is rejected - updated application may be eligible for submission at future deadline

**STEP 2: DSPC submits recommendations to IDA Board for final approval**

- >Board approves or returns the application 10 business days after DSPC approval

**STEP 3: New IDSP is certified upon Board Approval**

- >Announcement is coordinated with IDA staff at the applicant's discretion